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The More the Merrier Chapter 431 - 440

Chapter 431 The Village That She Had Been Before

Ethen was taken aback.

"Why did the man hang up so suddenly?"

He didn't even state the main point yet. Did he suddenly give up on spinning his tale?

Benjamin narrowed his eyes. The voice sounds familiar.

"Locate this guy."

Ethen widened his eyes in disbelief, and he blurted, "Mr. Graham, do you actually believe his words?"

Benjamin shot a look over and insisted, "Go and find out where the guy's from."

"Yes, sir!"

Ethen zipped his mouth and swiftly performed a search on the mysterious man.

He was utterly flabbergasted when he found out where he lived.

"Rutaceae Village?"

A frown crept up on Benjamin's face as he repeated the name, "Rutaceae Village?"

"That's right, the guy's from Rutaceae Village!" Ethen nodded.

He then added, "Isn't this the village Ms. York has visited before?"

Perhaps the villagers had seen the boy before. So, they made the call on purpose?

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He got all worked up at that thought.

Unbeknownst to him, Benjamin thought otherwise. His eyes widened as he finally recalled whose voice was it over the phone.

It's the village chief!

Meanwhile, the village chief led the police to arrest Raphael.

"Someone alleged that you've committed domestic violence. Please come with us to the police station."

"Domestic violence?" Raphael spluttered.

This is unbelievable! Could it be Mom who reported me?

"Let's go."

The police handcuffed him and took him away.

Raphael struggled to break free with all his might while shouting at the top of his lungs, "I didn't do it! You've got the wrong person! Who was it that reported me? I'm going to kill that person!"

Alas, his resistance was futile.

At the same time, a young boy could be seen calmly walking out of the police station which was situated next to the clinic.

The person who reported Raphael's offense was none other than Tim.

When he returned to the clinic with a big bag of food, he saw that Mary was about to get a jab.

The facilities at the clinic were extremely limited, and they could not offer her the much-needed treatment. However, since all public transportation had ceased operating at that hour, they could only stay at the clinic first.

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Tim had planned to bring Mary to a bigger hospital for consultation the following day.

“Grandma, try this. It’s meat bun!”

He might look unkempt, but his hands were clean. He took out a hot bun and offered it to Mary.

The crowd surrounding them could not take their eyes off of him as they gossiped.

Tim was well aware that the others despised him due to his dirty and messy appearance. Yet, he refused to move a muscle and stayed by Mary’s side faithfully.

The nurse wanted to help him wash his face, but he declined. He did not want to leave Mary’s side even for a few seconds because he was afraid that she might abandon him.

“Come over here, Tim, and let me wipe your face.”

Mary was very touched by Tim’s sincerity and gratitude. Upon understanding his intention, she dismissed the idea of sending him away.

“I won’t leave you.”

Her assurance cheered him up. He leaned forward and made her a promise. “Grandma, you’ll get better once we pay a visit to the big hospital. I’m sure of that.”

Mary plastered a smile on her face despite feeling sorry for the boy. She tried to brush it off by saying each consultation would easily cost them a few thousand.

A few thousand was already a significant figure for someone who resided in the village. Unbeknownst to her, the total for her medical expenditure was actually way beyond that amount.

Mary studied Tim’s clean face.

Everyone was dumbfounded the moment his good-looking face with very delicate features was revealed.

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This child is so gorgeous! He looks just like a doll. It's just a pity that he's too skinny.

"Hurry up and eat, Tim. Don't worry about me."

Mary tousled the boy's hair affectionately.

"Okay!" He nodded.

When the young and old had finished their food, they lay together on the small chair, trying to get some sleep. It was a sorry sight to behold.

A few nurses approached the duo and gave them a blanket. They were won over by the boy's cuteness.

One of them muttered to her colleagues, "Why do I have a feeling that I've seen the boy somewhere?"

"There's nothing strange about it. Maybe he's been here for vaccination before."

"I don't think so..."

Meanwhile, back at the Graham residence in Dellmoor, Arissa was looking for Benjamin after showering the kids.

She wanted to check if something happened since he had not shown up for quite some time.

However, Edwin informed her that Benjamin had gone out with Darius.

Furrowing her brows, she returned upstairs to the children.

Just when she pushed the door open, the five kids that were huddled together immediately sprung off and went lying down in their original positions.

Arching her brow, Arissa questioned, "What were you guys chatting about?"

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The More the Merrier Chapter 432

Chapter 432 My Brothers Want Me To Keep A Lookout

The five kids stared at Arissa while shaking their heads. Then, they responded in unison, "Nothing much."

Arissa did not buy their laconic replies. She sat on the bed and eye-balled the kids, starting from the eldest to the youngest. She repeated this multiple times, which made the children felt guilty.

"I'm pretty sure you're hiding some secrets from me."

Although she did not spend as much time with Gavin, she knew the other four whom she raised like the back of her palm.

She could sense that something fishy was going on with just one glance at them.

Zachary's heart skipped a beat. He quickly came up with a plan to avoid Arissa's interrogation.

"Mommy, do you like Mr. Graham?"

Arissa did not expect such a question from her son.

Feeling uneasy, she withdrew her gaze and rubbed her nose subconsciously. "Well, I don't hate him, but I don't like him either."

"What kind of answer is that?"

Jasper looked at her, puzzled.

"Well, sometimes I hate him. Other times, I think he's not bad," she added while fixing her gaze at the children.

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“Mommy, we’re asking if you have any feelings for Mr. Graham.”

Jesse climbed over and rested her chin on Arissa’s shoulders. Her rounded eyes stared at her mother intently.

Arissa pinched her daughter’s nose dotingly.

“Do you all like him then?”

The five of them pursed their lips and answered delightfully, “We like him if Mommy likes him.”

Arissa was amused by their answers.

“Cheeky monkeys!”

She lectured them with a smile, “He’s your daddy. No matter how he interacts with me or whether he is friendly, it shouldn’t affect your fondness toward him. He does love you lot very much, doesn’t he?”

Putting the kids as her priority, Arissa hoped that the children would grow to be more intimate with Benjamin as it would definitely benefit their development.

Personally, she wished that the kids would love her more than how much they liked Benjamin.

Zachary scoffed and said, “We can’t really feel it since he always treats us like this...”

As he spoke, he mimicked Benjamin’s serious expression, to which Arissa found so entertaining that she laughed out loud.

Oliver even started impersonating Benjamin and copied his father’s tone of voice, saying, “Gavin, bring your brother out.”

Pfft!

Arissa pinched her son’s cheek.

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“Don’t impersonate your daddy.”

“I’m just showing you what he’s actually like, Mommy,” Oliver rebutted.

Jesse looked at her brothers and stood up for Benjamin. “Honestly, Mr. Graham isn’t that fierce. He did smile at me!”

Instantly, everyone turned their heads to the girl.

“Sweetheart, when did Daddy smile at you?” Arissa was curious.

“It just happened today when my brothers wanted me to keep a lookout...”

Realizing that she had let her tongue slip, Jesse quickly covered her mouth with her hand and showed her four brothers an apologetic expression.

Faced with Arissa’s suspicious glare, the four boys shuddered.

“What were you guys doing that you needed your sister to keep a lookout for you?” She narrowed her eyes.

The four boys swallowed in fright, not knowing what to say.

“Mommy, we...” Jasper took a peek at Arissa’s expression and muttered.

“We’re trying to find out where our missing brother is, but we’re afraid that we’d be found out.”

“That’s all? Are you sure you weren’t up to something bad?” Arissa questioned further.

The four kids shook their heads vigorously. “Of course not!”

Considering their serious expressions, Arissa believed them.

“Well, as long as it’s not anything bad, you can go ahead and investigate. But don’t create any trouble. Have I made myself clear?”

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The children were so surprised that their mother had agreed to it so easily.

“Don’t worry, Mommy. We won’t do bad things,” assured Gavin who felt bad about hiding it from Arissa.

Sorry, Mommy, we didn’t mean to lie to you. We just didn’t want you to be sad.

Arissa stroked her children’s hair and prompted, “It’s getting late, time for bed.”

The five little ones looked at her and rushed over to give her a big hug.

“Good night, Mommy!”

Chuckling, Arissa tightened her embrace.

“Good night, my sweethearts!”

After tucking the kids in bed, Arissa left the room and gave Benjamin a call.

The phone rang for a very long time, but no one picked it up.

The More the Merrier Chapter 433

Chapter 433 The Orphanage Has No Record

In the car, Benjamin frowned as he looked at the phone screen lit up with an incoming call. It was hard to tell what he was thinking.

Ethen turned to him and reminded softly, “Mr. Graham, your phone is ringing.”

Benjamin’s eyes flickered. He pressed to answer the call just as the ringing was about to stop.

“Yes?” he said.

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"Benjamin, did you go out?" Arissa's voice came from the other line.

Benjamin's eyes flickered. "Yeah, I'm outside."

Arissa pondered for a moment and asked, "Did something happen?"

"No, it's nothing," Benjamin replied with a light chuckle. After a pause, he continued, "It's getting late. You and the children should rest early."

Arissa felt that he was hiding something from her. "Did you receive news about our child?"

Benjamin was stunned for a second. "No, not yet."

Arissa narrowed her eyes when she sensed that his tone had grown heavier.

Is there really no news, or is he hiding it from me?

"All right. You go ahead then." Arissa hung up immediately to call Bradley.

Benjamin stared at his phone and frowned. Has she noticed something?

Meanwhile, Arissa contacted Bradley to check the progress of his investigation.

"Boss, I was tracking Danna. However, the trail broke off once she brought the child to Yaleview. Someone had altered the surveillance footage," Bradley explained.

Arissa narrowed her eyes. "Can you find out when did someone alter it?"

"I will try," Bradley replied.

He tried to check if he could recover the surveillance records, only to find that someone had deleted them. Thus, they were unrecoverable.

"Boss, someone deleted the records an hour ago!" Bradley said.

An hour ago...

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Arissa felt her heart sank.

Ethen came to see Benjamin an hour ago. Both of them remained in the study for a long time. Did they do it? But why?

She clenched her fist and could not understand what was going on.

The only possible explanation she could think of was that Benjamin could be trying to protect Danna and did not want to go against her.

Arissa felt a stab to her heart.

She sat dazed for a long time until her phone rang.

She glanced at the phone screen. It was a call from the orphanage.

She answered it immediately. "Director..."

"Arissa, we've checked the records in the orphanages all over the country, but we can't find a child of your description..." the director said.

Arissa was disappointed. "Thank you, director. Sorry for the trouble."

The director comforted her. "It's nothing. Perhaps we didn't search carefully enough. We will continue searching."

"Thanks again." Arissa hung up and had a worried expression.

Since the orphanage did not have any information about the child, it would be harder to find him.

She felt her heart sink as she thought something could have happened to her child.

Therefore, she got up and pulled out her computer to continue searching.

Zachary woke up feeling thirsty. He came out of his room to get a drink.

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Just then, he noticed the light in Arissa's room was still on and came to check.

He opened the door and found her sitting on the carpet at the coffee table. She was focused on the computer screen, searching for something.

Zachary came near and looked at the computer screen. "Mommy, why aren't you sleeping? How long have you been investigating this?"

Arissa jumped at the sudden noise. She turned around and saw that it was her son. "Why are you up?"

"I was thirsty and wanted a drink. I noticed your light is still on, so I came to check on you," Zachary answered.

He looked at her before looking at the computer screen again.

Then, he bit his lower lip and said, "Mommy, it's late. You should have some rest and continue searching tomorrow."

Arissa patted his head and explained, "I want to find your brother as soon as possible. I'm worried about how he is doing out there."

Seeing Arissa's worried expression, Zachary felt sad for her.

Based on Mommy's character, she won't be able to feel at ease until she finds my brother.

"I understand. But you should still take care of your health!" he advised.

"I know. Go back to bed. I will go to bed too in a while," Arissa said to comfort Zachary. Seeing that he was thirsty, she poured him a glass of water.

The More the Merrier Chapter 434

Chapter 434 Tracking Benjamin

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"Mommy, remember to go to bed soon, okay?" Zachary said.

Then, he finished his glass of water and went back to bed.

"Okay." Seeing that Zachary had left, Arissa continued searching for her missing child.

Unfortunately, it was the same as what Bradley found. The trail broke halfway.

The fastest way to find her child was by following Danna's trail. However, the trail had gone cold.

Arissa had a feeling that Benjamin had something to do with it.

He left soon after Ethen came to meet with him. That's definitely suspicious...

At that thought, she bit her lower lip and gave Benjamin another call.

Unbeknownst to her, Benjamin was on a flight at the moment and did not answer her call.

What could he be doing?

Arissa glanced at the time and saw that it was midnight.

Her eyes flashed with an idea, and she decided to track Benjamin's location.

It turned out that he was in a neighboring city.

Arissa frowned and wondered what he was doing there. Then, she checked his position again, only to see that he was still on the move.

She sat before her laptop and continued to track his movements closely.

Seated on the plane with Benjamin, Ethen noticed the system alert notification and quickly reported to Benjamin, "Mr. Graham, someone is tracking you!"

Benjamin took the phone over and soon discovered the tracker's location.

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He wondered who could be tracking him.

Could it be Gavin? Or perhaps it's her?

"Mr. Graham, should I block it?" Ethen asked.

"No need." Benjamin put down the phone and continued with his work.

Ethen glanced at Benjamin and decided to message Edwin in secret to ask if anyone was still awake at home.

Soon, Edwin sent a reply: Ms. York's bedroom light is still on. I believe she is still awake.

Ethen hesitated but decided to inform Benjamin. "Mr. Graham, Edwin said that Ms. York hasn't gone to bed."

A glint flashed across Benjamin's eyes. "Get Edwin to bring her a cup of milk."

"Yes, Mr. Graham," Ethen replied and immediately relayed the instruction.

After receiving the message, Edwin prepared a cup of milk and brought it upstairs.

Knock, knock!

Arissa was surprised to hear someone knocking on the door. She got up and opened it. "Oh, Edwin?"

"Ms. York, it's late. Why aren't you sleeping yet?" Edwin asked.

"I'm rushing some work," Arissa replied with a smile.

Edwin gave her the cup of milk. "Mr. Graham asked me to prepare this for you. You should head to bed soon."

Arissa was surprised. How did Benjamin know that I was awake? Did he find out that I'm tracking him?

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She accepted the cup of milk and asked, "Thank you. Edwin, do you know where Mr. Graham went?"

The butler shook his head. "I'm sorry. Mr. Graham did not say anything. I believe he has something urgent to take care of."

Arissa nodded and told Edwin to go back to sleep before closing the door.

Where could Benjamin be? It's already past midnight.

Benjamin arrived at Rutaceae Village an hour later.

Ethen led the bodyguards and asked, "Mr. Graham, are we searching for the child now?"

Although Benjamin suddenly decided to come here to search for the child, he did not hold out much hope.

He glanced at the time. It was nearly two o'clock in the morning. "Bring the village chief here first."

He soon entered Arissa's courtyard in Rutaceae Village.

Ethen quickly ordered some men to clean up the place before giving a call to the village chief.

Rick Griffin, the village chief, was puzzled when he received a call from an unknown number at this hour.

He answered the call and heard that Benjamin wanted to see him. Thus, he immediately drove his electric car and rushed there.

Benjamin was already waiting for him with a pot of hot coffee when he arrived.

"M-Mr. Graham?" Rick was stunned to see Benjamin there in person.

"Mr. Griffin, please have a seat." Benjamin gestured to a chair, signaling Rick to sit down.

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Rick could not figure out why Benjamin would be looking for him at this hour and took a seat nervously. "Mr. Graham, is something the matter?"

Benjamin poured a cup of coffee and placed it before Rick. "Please, have some coffee first."

Rick glanced at them and took a sip of the coffee.

Soon after, Benjamin signaled Ethen with a glance, and the latter placed a photo before Rick.

The More the Merrier Chapter 435

Chapter 435 A Lead

It was a photo of Gavin.

Ethen looked at Rick and asked, "Mr. Griffin, do you remember this child?"

Rick recognized that the boy in the photo was one of the children he saw last time. He looked at Benjamin and Ethen with confusion. "Yes, isn't he one of the children who came with Ms. York?"

"Does your village has a child who looks like him?" Ethen asked.

Rick shook his head immediately. "No."

Benjamin furrowed his brow. The village chief seems certain about it. Could that person be lying then?

Benjamin glanced at Ethen.

This time, Ethen took out Raphael's photo. "Mr. Griffin, do you know this person?"

Rick recognized Raphael instantly. "Yes, I do. He's Raphael!"

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Ethen's gaze flashed. "Is he someone from your village?"

Rick nodded and seemed confused. "Why are you looking for him? The police took him away a few hours ago."

Ethen exchanged a glance with Benjamin before continuing, "Mr. Griffin, I received a call from Raphael saying that a boy in his house looked identical to Mr. Graham's son and was the child we were searching for. Therefore, we came here to ascertain whether it is true."

"Mr. Graham's son? Are you talking about Tim?" Rick looked at him.

Benjamin's eyes glinted. "There's really a child in Raphael's house?"

Rick nodded. "Yes, but..."

He looked at Benjamin and continued, "But Tim doesn't look like your son at all!"

As far as he remembered, Tim had dirt all over his face and did not seem like he could be Benjamin's son.

Disappointment flashed across Benjamin's eyes at that.

"That being said, they did pick Tim up from somewhere..." Rick added.

Ethen asked, "Is the boy around five years old?"

Rick nodded. "Yes, a few years ago, Mary and her husband went to Salinsburgh and brought back a newborn. They said that they found him in a dumpster. At the time, we advised them to report to the police and hand the child to them. However, the child was weak and was frequently ill. They had to keep bringing the child to the hospital."

Rick paused and continued, "They had to wait until the child was better before they could make a police report. But no one came to claim the child. As such, they believe that the child's parents abandoned him. Since their biological son, Raphael, was in prison for robbery, they decided to adopt the child."

Hearing that, Benjamin felt that there was hope again.

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Ethen became excited too. "Mr. Graham, could he really be your son?"

They found the child in a dumpster in Salinsburgh, so it fits the circumstances. I don't think this is a coincidence. He must be Mr. Graham's son.

"Where is their house? Can you bring me there?" Benjamin urgently wanted to see the boy. He wished to confirm whether the boy was his son as soon as possible.

Rick sighed. "We went to the house just now, but Mary and Tim were gone. We have no idea where they went. I'm not sure they would be there if we go now."

Then, he looked at Benjamin in confusion. "Mr. Graham, haven't you already found your son? Why are you still searching for him?"

"We are looking for another child. He has been missing since birth," Ethen explained the truth to the village chief.

Rick was shocked. If Tim really is his son, he would have nothing to worry about for the rest of his life.

"I'll bring you there. The house is a little far from our village. Tim always looked dirty, so I'm not sure he's your child," he said.

"You only have to bring us there. We can confirm it ourselves," Ethen replied.

Benjamin followed Rick to Raphael's house.

He could not describe his feelings upon seeing the old and shabby house.

Although he wasn't sure whether the child was his son, he could not help feeling sad for the child.

"They are impoverished. Ever since Mary's husband, James, passed away, her health grew worse. She could not afford to see a doctor, and Tim had to work to support the family," Rick explained.

"He had to work?" Ethen was shocked to hear that a five-year-old child had to work.

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The More the Merrier Chapter 436

Chapter 436 Is He My Son

“Yes, there is a mine on the mountain. It’s hard to build a road up the mountain, so the owner of the mine hired many adults and children from the village to carry the mining products from the mountain...” Rick said.

Ethen could not imagine how a young child could work.

Benjamin went into the house and took a look around.

The house consisted of three rooms. The one in the middle was the living room.

The other two rooms were most likely bedrooms.

One of the rooms had a big bed made by combining a few benches.

“Mary and Tim stayed in this room,” Rick explained.

The room was messy, but it was clean.

The other bedroom belonged to Raphael. None of the doors had locks and were only partially closed.

Anyone could enter and leave freely. Furthermore, the kitchen consisted only of a thatched roof surrounded by a fence.

The house was dilapidated and had nothing of value.

If Ethen had not seen the house in person, he would not have believed that there was still such severe poverty in this modern age.

Benjamin glanced at the surroundings and felt uncomfortable about what he saw.

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It saddened him to think that his child grew up in such an impoverished surroundings.

“Mr. Graham, we must find them fast,” Ethen said.

Mary and Tim were not at home. Therefore, they could not ascertain whether Tim was the child they had been searching for.

Benjamin nodded, and Ethen immediately ordered his subordinates to find where the boy went.

They analyzed where a child and an old lady could go at night.

“Mr. Griffin, can you tell us about their daily life?” Benjamin sat on a stone bench and looked at the messy kitchen. He frowned when he thought there might have been a scuffle earlier based on the state of the place.

Rick sighed and told Benjamin about Tim’s life. “Mary and James loved the boy and regarded him as their own. Unfortunately, life became difficult after Raphael came out of prison. Raphael liked gambling, so he would often force them to give him money and would beat them up if they refused.”

He took a deep breath and continued, “Later, James’ sickness recurred and worsened rapidly. He soon passed away, leaving only Mary and Tim. Since Mary could hardly walk and had many illnesses, she could not work. Thus, it fell onto Tim to provide for the family. He had to go out to work for their living expenses and Mary’s medical expenses. Perhaps Tim brought Mary to see a doctor. I think the mine workers were paid their salary yesterday.”

At that, Ethen ordered someone to check at the hospital.

Benjamin’s expression darkened, and he emanated an icy aura. “How did Raphael treat him?”

Rick was stunned for a moment before realizing that Benjamin was talking about Tim. “Terrible. Raphael frequently scolded and beat Tim up. Furthermore, he even wanted to sell Tim, but Mary protected the boy from him. Since Tim has been earning money, Raphael had probably taken him to his debtors as security for his debts.”

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Benjamin turned grim with fury. "Why did you not call the police?"

Rick sighed. "It's a complicated matter, and the police are reluctant to get involved in family matters. As long as it is not too much, no one would report to the police."

Just then, Ethen obtained the town's surveillance footage and quickly sought Rick's confirmation. "Mr. Griffin, is this old lady and child them?"

Rick went to Ethen's side and looked at it before nodding. "Yeah, it's them. It seems they have gone to the town."

Benjamin got up and glanced at the surveillance footage. It showed Tim's back but not his face.

"We're going to the town," he ordered, and Ethen immediately led a team to search in town.

However, they could not find Tim or Mary even after a few hours.

"Mr. Graham, the police station's surveillance cameras caught Tim..." Ethen said.

Benjamin frowned and ordered, "Show me."

Ethen quickly obtained the surveillance footage and showed it to Benjamin.

In the footage, Tim appeared for a while before disappearing out of the camera's range.

Benjamin paused the video and enlarged the image.

The image showed Tim's dirty face. Thus, Benjamin was unable to identify whether he was the missing child.

"Do the comparison now," he instructed.

"Yes, sir!" Ethen immediately uploaded Gavin and Tim's photos into the software to compare their facial contour.

Benjamin appeared tense as he waited for the result. He had never felt this nervous before.

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Could that boy really be my son?

The More the Merrier Chapter 437

Chapter 437 Did Not Sleep The Whole Night

After a minute, the results was out.

Seeing the authentication results, Ethen was practically overflowing with excitement.

“Mr. Graham, the results are out! It’s a ninety-one percent match!”

That was a considerably high similarity index.

Benjamin’s eyes lit up.

“Arrange more men to sweep the place!”

“Roger that!” Ethen promptly gathered more men to continue the search.

Stepping out of the car, Benjamin stood along the streets in the unfamiliar village. There was barely anyone within his line of vision.

He strode toward the direction of the police station.

On the other side, at Yaleview, Arissa did not sleep the entire night either. She had been searching for leads regarding her missing child and simultaneously tracking Benjamin’s movements.

Realizing that Benjamin was at Rutaceae Village, she was perplexed.

Why is he there? Could it be that he has found leads about our child?

Her eyes brightened up at that thought, and immediately, she made a call to Benjamin.

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Benjamin's phone rang just as he arrived at the police station.

He stilled. Why is she calling at this hour?

After a brief hesitation, he answered the call.

"Benjamin!" Arissa exclaimed over the phone.

"Yes? What is it that you're calling me so early?"

Benjamin scrunched his brows. Don't tell me she didn't sleep for the whole night?

"W-Where did you go?" As soon as Arissa blurted out those words, a surge of embarrassment washed over her as it seemed almost like she was checking on him.

She quickly changed her stance and said, "You didn't come home. What are you so busy with?"

Benjamin put one hand in his pocket and curled the corners of his lips into a satisfied smile.

"Are you concerned about me?"

Arissa pursed her lips and brushed him off with another question. "Where are you now?"

"I'm away on a business trip, so I won't be back that soon."

Although Benjamin did not update her on where he was, she knew well about his whereabouts.

"Oh," she murmured in acknowledgement.

How dare he still lie to me?

"Did you manage to find some clues about the child?" she quickly asked.

"Not yet."

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He surveyed the surroundings, intending to tell her after finding Tim.

Arissa frowned and shot him another question.

“The footage before Danna brought Gavin to look for you; were you the one who deleted it?”

A glint flashed across Benjamin’s eyes at once. Little did he expect her investigation to progress so quickly.

“No,” he denied.

Indeed, he was not the one who deleted it, but Ethen.

Arissa was almost confident he was the culprit, yet the man denied it so straightforwardly that it caught her slightly off guard.

Was it really not him?

“Did you not sleep last night?” The man’s deep voice, which contained a trace of concern, sounded from the other end of the call.

“I did. I just woke up a while ago,” Arissa casually answered. “Anyway, that’s all for now. I’m hanging up now.”

With that, she hung up promptly but remained seated, unable to grasp the entire situation.

If it wasn’t Benjamin, then who could it be? Or was he lying just now?

A turmoil of emotions weighed down upon her.

Meanwhile, Benjamin tucked his phone away and headed into the superintendent’s office.

Learning that Tim was there to file a police report, especially that it was against Raphael for abusing Mary and him, the intimidating look on Benjamin’s face grew intense, and a spine-chilling malicious glint flashed in his eyes.

All the others present dared not go near.

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They thought the man would do something, but it turned out otherwise.

“Mr. Graham, we haven’t found the boy. There’s no news from the hotel and hospital!” Ethen had made his way over, and the moment he caught sight of Benjamin walking out of the police station, he rushed forward to report their search progress.

Benjamin’s expression turned grim. “I’ve exchanged a brief greeting with them. They’ll be dispatching some men to lock down the place before searching. Go and liaise with them.”

He did not bring enough men over to the village this round. Therefore, he had to rely on the locals for help.

“Got it!”

Just as Ethen was about to step in, Benjamin stopped him and ordered coldly, “Teach Raphael a lesson for me. And make sure he stays in there!”

Ethen nodded in reply and sped off to make the necessary arrangements.

With his eyes fixed on the gradually increasing crowd along the streets in the village, Benjamin’s eyebrows drew together.

Where could that kid have gone?

At the same time, Tim spotted some bodyguards combing the area looking for someone. Their aggressive and dour appearances instantly convinced him that they were just like Raphael.

What further reinforced his perception was when he vaguely heard those men questioning the public about Mary and his whereabouts. Immense astonishment engulfed him as he thought they were acting under Raphael’s commands.

Without delay, he sped to find the nurses and patients who had seen him before.

The More the Merrier Chapter 438

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Chapter 438 Artfully Avoiding The Bodyguards

“Excuse me, did you all see those mysterious men in black? They’re bad guys. They must be here to catch us. If they ask you guys if you’ve ever seen us, please don’t tell them! Or else my grandma and I will die in their hands!” Tears and snot streamed down Tim’s face as he said pitifully. It was a sight that could easily cause one to be sympathetic.

“Don’t be afraid. We’ll keep your presence a secret. Go find a place to hide for now.” The nurses felt their hearts ached for him and agreed to his plea readily as they ruffled his head.

“Thank you! Thank you so much!” With that, Tim darted away.

While no one noticed him, he scuttled back into the ward.

“Grandma, I’ll help you to the restroom. We’ll head to the hospital later.”

In truth, Tim had asked around and knew there would be a vehicle heading to the hospital to collect IV drips. He figured they would be able to tag along without paying any fares.

“All right.” Mary followed Tim to the restroom.

Just as they headed in, some bodyguards came over.

Holding onto a snapshot of Tim, the guard questioned, “Has anyone seen this child?”

“No,” Hearing that reply, he threw another question. “Then, have you seen this old lady?”

“No.”

Hiding in a corner, Tim felt relieved after hearing how the cooperative crowd had pretended they had never seen him before.

After the bodyguards left, the boy ran out and bowed politely. “Thank you, everyone. Thank you so much!”

“You’re welcome. Tim, do you need our help to call the police for you?” Various family members of the patients in the ward kindly offered their help.

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"No, that won't be necessary." He waved his hand dismissively. "Those people look too troublesome to handle, so we will avoid them ourselves. Even if you call the police, they'll be released soon after getting arrested. My grandma and I will lead an even more difficult life if that's the case. You guys have helped us out so much earlier, and that's more than enough. I'm very grateful for that!"

Tim's words made perfect sense to the crowd. "You two have to be extra cautious then."

"Sure thing." Tim nodded his head and ran to the entrance to observe the situation.

Only upon making sure that those bodyguards had left did he run back and pick Mary up to get onto the vehicle heading to the hospital.

About half an hour later, Benjamin gave another order since the search was still fruitless.

"Call Jack and the others to come over and help with the search here."

At that, Ethen relayed his instructions at once. "Mr. Graham, we've almost combed the entire area. Perhaps the kid has already left the village?"

Otherwise, how is it possible that we can't find him?

Ethen was utterly baffled.

"As you mentioned, we 'almost' searched everywhere in the village. That means there are still places we have yet to search," Benjamin chided.

He then pulled out his laptop and accessed the village's surveillance cameras to check if there were any leads.

"Have you allocated people to every entrance of this village?"

"I did. As long as Tim is still in the village, we'll definitely be able to find him." Ethen spoke in a convincing tone.

Hearing that, Benjamin carried on looking through the surveillance cameras.

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Back at Yaleview, the five little ones had woken up and ran to find Arissa.

Seeing her sitting right before the computer, Zachary was shocked. "Mommy, did you not sleep for the whole night?"

Gavin threw a glance at his brother. "How do you know that Mommy didn't sleep?"

"Mommy was still wide awake when I woke up in the middle of the night to get some water," Zachary explained, his gaze still locked on Arissa.

Upon noticing the signs of fatigue on her face, the boy furrowed his brows.

I'm sure Mommy didn't sleep.

"I was so busy I forgot about the time." Arissa hurriedly tried to explain to the kids.

"Mommy, why didn't you sleep?" Oliver turned to look at her concernedly.

Just then, the observant Jasper spotted the content on the computer screen and remarked, "Mommy is trying to find our missing brother!"

Hearing that, the five little ones exchanged glances with one another.

Jesse walked over, appearing distressed. "Mommy, why did you not sleep? We'll be upset if you're tired out because of that!"

Arissa caressed her daughter's head. "I'm fine. You guys should go and wash up now."

"Mommy, you can't do that. You'll get sick if you don't sleep!" Gavin persuaded anxiously.

Arissa knew the kids were worried for her, so she nodded and promised, "I'll pay more attention from now on, okay? Now, go ahead and wash up. You guys still have to go to school later."

Finishing her words, she stood up and prepared to take them back to their room to wash up.

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The More the Merrier Chapter 439

[The More the Merrier](#)

Chapter 439 Revealing The Truth

"Mommy, we'll wash our faces on our own. You should wash yours too and have breakfast with us! And you can take some rest after that!" Zachary urged.

"That sounds great!" Arissa replied with a smile.

After the kids headed out, she trotted to the bathroom to wash up.

Returning to their room, the kids closed the door tight and started their discussion.

"Mommy stayed up all night because she was searching for clues about our missing brother," Zachary commented.

A frown formed between Gavin's brows. "Why don't we tell Mommy the truth?"

Oliver bit his lip and nodded in agreement. "I think we have to tell Mommy. If not, Mommy's body won't be able to take it if she continues to skip on sleeping."

"But I'm sure she won't be able to handle the truth if we tell her now." An insurmountable worry surged within Jasper.

Jesse's eyes were brimming with tears. "Our brother is such a poor thing. Mommy will be hurt if she finds out about it."

The five kids were shrouded with worry as they mulled over the problem.

"Well, it's better to reveal it now than dragging it. After all, Mommy will have to find out the truth someday. She could endure it for one day. But what about today?"

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Gavin could not bear to see Arissa that way. He had wanted to continue hiding the truth from her, but learning that she had been staying up to look for clues overnight, he felt his heart sink to the bottom of his stomach.

"I'm all for it! Let's tell Mommy about it!" Zachary raised his hand.

Gavin is right. Revealing the truth now will hurt less than in the long run. Mommy will find out one day anyway. The later she knows, the longer she has to be worried. Mommy's body won't be able to take it sooner or later.

Likewise, Oliver raised his hand in full support. "Me too!"

Jesse and Jasper were the only ones who had yet to voice their opinions.

Jesse turned to look at Jasper.

The latter turned to his three other brothers, who all had the same views, and sighed. "Let's tell Mommy then."

Since Jesse had always been obedient and would follow her brothers, she had no objections to it either.

"Let's go tell Mommy now." Jasper had his eyes on the others.

"Not now. Let's do it later. We'll tell her after breakfast." Oliver was afraid Arissa would lose her appetite after learning about the truth.

Gavin and Zachary thought the same way too.

"If that's so, why don't we tell Mommy after she gets some sleep?" Jasper proposed another idea he reckoned was better.

"If we don't say it later, Mommy will surely continue to rack her brains over this matter. There's no saying when she'll take time to rest." Zachary wrinkled his nose.

Jasper sighed dejectedly.

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"Let's go wash up first. Otherwise, Mommy will come looking for us soon," Jesse reminded her brothers.

"All right. Let's go." Oliver gestured and headed into the bathroom with Jesse first, while Gavin, Zachary, and Jasper followed behind.

As the kids brushed their teeth, an idea flashed across Jasper's mind. "Why don't we tell Mr. Graham, then get him to tell Mommy about it?"

Gavin and Zachary frowned upon hearing that.

The former was the first to raise his objection. "It's no use telling him. I doubt he knows how to comfort Mommy."

Zachary seconded those words. He believed that Benjamin did not seem to shower Arissa with much care.

"I'm sure Mommy's heart will break after we tell her the truth later. When that happens, we'll have to console her. Jesse, if we can't do that well, you'll have to use your skills to cheer her up."

Jesse bobbed her head vehemently. "Don't worry, Zachary. I'll make sure Mommy won't be sad."

They continued with their discussion while washing up and only ran to open the door when Arissa came over to knock on their door.

"Mommy, we're done!"

Arissa patted the kids' heads and locked her warm and gentle gaze on them as she said, "Come on, let's head downstairs for breakfast."

Jesse gripped her mother's finger and said sweetly, "Mommy, later after breakfast, you must have a good rest. Or else, we will be worried."

"All right," Arissa answered in a gentle tone.

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Gavin, Zachary, Oliver, and Jasper stole glances at each other and followed her down the stairs.

The More the Merrier Chapter 440

Chapter 440 I Am Not Thinking Of Him

Edwin had finished preparing breakfast for the family. At the sight of Arissa and the little ones coming down, he warmly ushered them over to have breakfast.

“Good morning, Edwin.”

“Good morning, Mr. Whitley!” The five little ones followed and greeted Edwin.

“Good morning, children!” He rubbed their heads adoringly and carried them onto their seats.

During breakfast, Arissa had only eaten a few mouthfuls when she noticed that the five little ones did not have much of an appetite. Even Jesse, who could usually eat a lot of food, took small bites and even picked on her food.

Puzzlement overwhelmed Arissa. “Is there something wrong with you guys?”

Had it only been one of the children who had behaved that way, she would have thought he was ill. But since they all acted the same way, she figured something was off.

The five kids turned to look at each other, then shifted their gazes back to Arissa.

“Nope!”

Arissa knitted her brows together. Nothing’s wrong, yet they’re behaving like this?

“Are you all feeling unwell?”

With that said, she stood up and reached out to touch their foreheads.

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"No," Zachary quickly denied.

Finding that their body temperature was normal, Arissa stared at them, who were, by now, all shaking their heads in denial.

"Mommy, we aren't unwell!"

Hmm, if they're not unwell, then they must be keeping something to themselves.

Intending to query them later, Arissa changed the subject. "Hurry and have your breakfast. I'll send you guys to school after this."

Only then did the five kids begin to dig into their breakfast.

"Mommy, you should eat more!"

They were busy picking some food and offering them to Arissa.

"All right, all right. My sweethearts, you should eat more too!"

She then passed each of them an egg.

"Mr. Whitley, is Daddy not home?" Gavin knitted his brows when he noticed that Benjamin was nowhere to be found.

"Well, something cropped up, so Mr. Graham went out last night. He isn't back yet."

The pucker between Gavin's eyebrows deepened. "Where did he go?"

He didn't come home the entire night?

Zachary and his other siblings also seemed slightly surprised that Benjamin did not return home last night.

"I'm not sure about that."

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It was evident that Gavin grew angry, and upon sensing that, Edwin immediately reassured, "There might be something urgent. Mr. Graham seemed like he was in a rush when he left the house."

Arissa's eyes darted between Edwin and Gavin before she clarified, "Sweetheart, your daddy has gone on a business trip. If you miss him, you can give him a call."

"I don't miss him at all!" Gavin snorted arrogantly.

Arissa could not help but heave a deep sigh.

Zachary turned to Gavin and threw him a look, seemingly attempting to ask if they should tell Arissa about the truth since Benjamin was not at home.

Arissa waited till the kids finally ate their fills before trying to probe them regarding the situation earlier. "So, what's going on just now? Is there something on your mind?"

Conflicted, the kids snuck a glance at her and bit their lips.

Arissa arched her brow and softened her tone. "Come on then. Share with me what happened."

"Mommy, we're afraid it'll break your heart," Zachary explained nervously.

Arissa could not wrap her head around the situation. "Well, what is it? You all have to tell me first!"

At this point, the five kids exchanged knowing looks with each other.

Then, Gavin softly replied, "Mommy, we... actually, we..."

"It's a good thing that you guys are still around! I thought you'd left for school by now!"

Darius' sudden appearance interrupted the kids' confession.

"Old Mr. Graham." Arissa stood up to welcome Darius. "Have you had breakfast?"

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“Not yet. I’m actually here to bring you guys breakfast. I decided to make more at the last minute, that’s why I’m late.”

Seeing that they had all eaten breakfast, he was relieved that he had prepared food items that were convenient to carry around.

He took some out and passed it to Arissa. “Issa, you should try some too. The kids can bring the rest to eat at school.”

“Edwin always prepares breakfast for us over here. Isn’t it too troublesome for you to prepare for us too?” Arissa felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

“Not at all. All that matters is that you guys enjoy the food. Hurry up and try some!”

Met with Darius’ warm hospitality, Arissa could only take a bite of it.

On the other hand, the five little ones shared a look before looking back at Darius, who showed up unannounced. Without any other choice, they ultimately swallowed those words they had wanted to tell their mother.

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